



# Department of Health & Social Care

*Rt. Hon. Victoria Atkins MP*  
*Secretary of State for Health and Social Care*

Steve Brine MP  
Chair, Health and Social Care Select Committee  
House of Commons  
[By email]

4 March 2024

Dear Steve,

I am pleased to let you know that after we re-entered negotiations with the British Medical Association (BMA) and Hospital Consultants and Specialists Association (HCSA) committees last month, we have reached agreement on an amended offer that the Trade Unions will put to their members, with a recommendation to accept. If this offer is accepted, it will bring an end to the industrial dispute by NHS consultants.

All parties negotiated in good faith and strived to find a resolution that also acknowledges the wider economic pressures facing the UK.

The principles and aims of the updated offer remain the same. The updated offer adds further clarity and specificity to the offer, as well as addressing some concerns that consultants have raised.

This is a reform offer, that invests in modernising the consultants' pay structure – reducing the number of pay points and the time it takes to reach the top of the pay scale, taking effect from 1st March 2024. As we originally proposed, this would make it faster for consultants to progress and help mitigate the gender pay gap which was expressly highlighted in the Independent Review into Gender Pay Gaps in Medicine in England. Under the revised offer, the government has also agreed to include an uplift for consultants with 4 – 7 years of experience in direct response to members' concerns.

To enable these reforms, unions have agreed to end Local Clinical Excellence Awards (LCEAs) going forward – an employer level bonus scheme – which has been seen to contribute to pay inequalities.

The updated offer reaffirms our intention to introduce pay progression arrangements, which link pay progression and evidence of skills, competencies and experience, and further clarifies how this will work in practice.

As with the original offer, this package also gives consultants access to enhanced shared parental leave provisions - rightly bringing them in line with staff across our NHS.

In addition, the government will enact changes to the operation of the Review Body on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration (DDRB) This offer goes further than the previous offer by setting out the detail of work to reform the process for the appointment of members to the DDRB, and further revising the panel's terms of reference.

The government has listened carefully to the concerns of consultants and their representatives, particularly around retention, motivation and morale. This revised offer has been carefully balanced to meet those concerns whilst also to ensure value for the taxpayer.

The BMA and the HCSA will put the offer to their members for a vote in the coming weeks, with a recommendation to accept. No further consultant strike action will be called by the BMA and HCSA consultant committees in England while members are being consulted.

I would be happy to discuss this offer in more detail if that would be helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Victoria Atkins". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**RT HON VICTORIA ATKINS MP**  
**SECRETARY OF STATE FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**